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FOREWORD

Normally I do not wallow in nostalgia; life is too short to keep looking back. But a recent reappraisal of old Beatles masters at Abbey Road has enabled me to delve into the past without too much of a guilt complex. I have listened again to the original tapes that we made all those years ago. Can it really be 30 years since I introduced the Fab Four to the strange and wonderful world of recording at EMI Studios in London? Even in 1962 they were experienced performers, although their genius for creating brilliant music and songs had yet to emerge. Certainly they were no strangers to hard work, and the years that followed saw them plunge into a whirlwind of concerts, broadcasts, feature-films, TV appearances, press conferences and photo calls that would have broken lesser men. Make no mistake about their lives then; there was little glamour in their goldfish bowl, and far too many demands were made on them.

As one of those behind the scenes urging them on, I had to stake my claim on their time for recording, which they fortunately enjoyed. In the studio their inventiveness and quest for new sounds is well known. They were quick learners, and in no time the master found himself becoming the student. Once the studio became their priority – from 1966 on – their horizons were limitless. Always curious, they insisted on finding new sounds and newer ways of achieving them.

Of course, there were moments when I could cheerfully have strangled one or other of them, and no doubt the feeling sometimes was reciprocated, but my enduring memory of those times is the enormous fun it all was. We really did not think about material success and the fortunes that they were earning. Our only consideration was to achieve the very best that we could, and we were completely united in that aim. If I inwardly believed we were developing an art form that would last for decades I kept it to myself. The value of what we were doing was never discussed. But we all knew that something really worthwhile was emerging.

Of all the chroniclers who have studied the lives of John, Paul, George and Ringo, Mark Lewisohn stands supreme. His dedication in getting all the true facts and cataloguing them, coupled with a style of writing that is most readable, leaves him with no rival. Time and again he has proven that he knows far more about what we did and when we did it than any of us. His book on the Beatles' recording sessions is an authoritative journal that I find invaluable. So many other books have been written about the lives of the Beatles that are less than truthful and a great deal of misinformed rubbish has been avidly devoured. We are fortunate to have Mark's scholarship. We need have no fears about his latest work, The Complete Beatles Chronicle; it will be as accurate as it is detailed.

GEORGE MARTIN